

# PRESS RELEASE

USS Pueblo

## COMMAND INFORMATION BUREAU

U.S. NAVAL AMPHIBIOUS BASE, CORONADO, CALIFORNIA

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### Proceedings of the Court of Inquiry

Morning, 7 February 1969

The court convened at 9:04 a.m., Feb. 7, 1969, with Captain John H. D. Williams from the Chief of Naval Operations as the witness. He described his responsibilities with regard to Navy security matters and particularly as they relate to procurement of, and means of, destruction for crypto and other classified material.

He stated with regard to destruction of documents, they must be destroyed so that no reconstruction is possible and that other equipment should be destroyed so that no reconstruction or recognition is possible.

He stated that on Jan. 23, 1968, the Navy's primary means of destruction were fire axes, sledges, incinerators, shredders, weighted bags, all supported by gasoline, diesel fuel, acetylene torches and so forth.

He said he was familiar with the PUEBLO's destruct capabilities and added that on that date there was a National Security Agency prohibition against carrying incendiaries onboard

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the ship for destruction purposes. This prohibition was rescinded on Feb. 11, 1969, by a message to all Navy commands. He noted this had resulted from the PUEBLO's seizure.

He read the definition of top secret material from the Navy Security Manual and also instructions concerning destruction of crypto material.

He said it was his belief that emergency destruction would entail extraordinary procedures. He estimated required time for destruction of classified material aboard PUEBLO to be one hour, and said he envisioned the use of every existing capability for the purpose of emergency destruction.

He stated he believed that when emergency destruction was required ventilating systems normally secured at general quarters should be placed in operation to assist in destruction.

He described burning and jettisoning as a primary means of destruction. He said there were no precise limitations on the depth of water in which material could be jettisoned, adding that he considered it to be the determination of the Commanding Officer whether the depth was sufficient to make salvaging impractical. He knew of no reference to the 100 fathom curve except for the one in NWP-150A pertaining to ships sinking beyond that limit allowing their classified material to sink with the ship.

He acknowledged the development of new Navy systems presently in use to assure better emergency destruction and scuttling.

He knew of no particular agency which had the responsibility to determine the shipboard allowance of classified material, or of any limit on such publications, and voiced a belief that it was

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the responsibility of the Commanding Officer and the crypto officer to insure adequate destruction capabilities, and the amount of material that should be aboard. For certain ships, he said, there is a review ordered to determine limitations on their allowance.

He described the operational commander, in this case Commander Naval Forces, Japan, as the one with the responsibility of determining the ship's destruct capability.

He said that tearing up paper into little bits did not meet criteria for destruction, and that shredding was permissible as a means of destruction if mixed with other material and streamed over the side at dusk under certain conditions.

He said he believed that a Commanding Officer should use all means available to preclude unauthorized disclosure, and that weight bags in the Navy supply system could be used for jettisoning crypto material. He did not know that particular bags were made for exceptionally high classified material.

In describing his belief that a compartment fire would be an effective means of destruction, he said he was not proposing a "Viking funeral pyre," but rather a controlled fire which would not necessarily endanger the ship. He considered a gutted compartment a good trade-off for effecting destruction.

He said if capture were imminent, he would use whatever means were possible for ridding the ship of classified material including jettisoning.

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He noted that in PUEBLO-class ships a procedure has now been developed providing that all classified material destined for a particular ship be sent to the fleet commander, screened, and reproduced on water-soluble paper.

He still envisioned one hour as maximum destruct time for PUEBLO, even if she were under fire.

In response to the president of the court's question as to why the Navy had moved so slowly in perfecting means of destruction, he noted that classified crypto gear components were made of quite durable material hard to destroy, and that paper in bulk also is difficult to destroy, and will even resist thermite. He added that delay in developing adequate devices had stemmed in part from the safety aspects involved in handling thermite, and acknowledged that no major effort had been made 'til after PUEBLO had been seized.

He stated that the Chief of Naval Operations had the responsibility for the ship while she was being converted; was not aware that no incinerator had been provided, and believed the responsibility for procuring such equipment belonged to the type commander. He admitted that Naval Ships System Command plans for conversion were incomplete, but he had not himself reviewed the specifications for the destruct system. He had no report from the Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey considering the system inadequate, and cited a message from COMNAVFORJAPAN in late December verifying the destruct capability aboard PUEBLO.

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In response to a question from the counsel for the party as to which was more valuable, preventing information from falling into foreign hands or protection of human life, he again cited the definition of top secret and instructions concerning crypto gear destruction, and pointed out there was more involved than the classification of material generated and received aboard.

He stated that he considered the requirements for emergency destruction to override other destruction such as possible limitation on water depth and use of ventilating systems. He was not aware of submarine utilization of TNT kegs.

He said PUEBLO had an estimated 2000 pounds of classified documents aboard, and that plans for emergency destruction should have provided for access to these publications and designation of personnel to destroy them.

He admitted that wounds and deaths would have reduced personnel for this vital function, and stated that his one hour estimate for destruction included gathering of material to be destroyed. He said he would not have designated a specific compartment for firing, that this was the judgement of the Commanding Officer, and that such judgement would have to include consideration for wiring, and so forth, passing through the selected compartment.

He did not know when the research spaces were certified, but stated that such certification would have included evaluation of the ship's destruct capabilities.

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The court recessed at 10 a.m., until 10:45, when Radiomen Second Class Charles H. Crandell, Jr., was called as a witness. Crandell described his responsibility aboard the ship, stating that he had monitored the HICOM circuit for the entire trip, but had not used it.

When he was summoned to the pilot house by RM2 Hayes, his duties were to prepare for destruction and to assist with the HICOM circuit. He said three separate attempts were made to bring the circuit up, by RM2 Hayes, Electronics Technician Second Class Clifford C. Nolte, and Lt. (j.g.) Schumacher. Shortly after the first firing he was sent forward by RM2 Hayes to the forward electronics storeroom to destroy publications stored in the safe. He said he had destroyed all higher classification material and was starting on lower classification material, when he was brought more highly classified publications by Lt. (j.g.) Frederick D. Schumacher, Jr. He went aft to burn these in the area where Fireman Duane D. Hodges, Shipfitter Third Class Steven E. Weslk, and Sergeant Robert J. Chicca were burning. He was wounded by the same shell that killed Hodges and was dragged from the passageway to the forward crew's berthing compartment, where he was treated by Commissaryman First Class Harry Lewis and Seaman Richard J. Rogala. He later received word to muster on the well deck, and finally was returned, blindfolded, to the crew's compartment.

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He went on to say that there was a great effort to destroy material and equipment throughout the ship. When he was being helped to the forward compartment, he noticed a fire in the starboard passageway, and the swinging of axes and hammers in the research spaces, as well as a ripping up of papers.

He stated that the PUEBLO never attempted to use the HICOM, but merely monitored it. The frequencies were usually shifted two times a day, but not at any particular time.

His previous duty was aboard USS Yorktown and NavComSta Japan.

The next witness was Gunner's Mate First Class Kenneth Roy Wadley, who has been in the Navy for 13 years of continuous sea duty. He described the equipment under his cognizance, as well as his duties. He stated that he commenced training his gun crews, as well as the entire deck force, once the 50 caliber guns were received in Japan. They also spent two days on the marine firing range in Yokosuka with the guns. His evaluation of the gun crews was that they were not very accurate. He said the guns were exercised only once after PUEBLO left Sasebo, and he believed it took place off of Korea. He was concerned about the fact that no protection was afforded while manning the guns. He stated that PUEBLO had about 10,000 rounds of 50 caliber ammunition on board, and that all but about 400 rounds were stored in ready service lockers near the mounts. The rest were stored in the paint locker.

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He was not satisfied with the placement of the mounts on board, and desired positioning that would have afforded an arc of fire of 180 degrees for both mounts. Although the mount aft had approximately 180 degrees of arc, the forward mount was about 90 degrees.

He estimated that only short bursts of fifteen rounds or less could be fired to keep the barrel from overheating. He also estimated that the guns could fire between 450-700 rounds per minute maximum.

He said that on the morning of the 23rd he had inspected the mounts and knocked the ice off the canvas covers. When he was on the mess decks, he first observed the 50-1, and continued to observe it until GQ. He didn't go to his station on the after mount, because no one was to go topside. Instead, he went to Repair Two, his original station before the mounts were put on PUEBLO. On his way there, he grabbed some battle helmets and passed them out. He saw a hole in the side of the ship which would expose people to the outside.

He made no preparation to man the mounts or to break out small arms. He would have done both when ordered, even though he realized that he would be exposed by manning the mount. He estimated that it would take five to ten minutes to man the mount and get it ready for firing.

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When he reported to Repair Two, he took the duties of Scene Leader and was dispatched to check for damage and report any to the bridge. He then stated that he did not see any damage to the ship.

He estimated the effective range of the 50 caliber was 2000 yards; the Thompson about 400 yards; and the 45 caliber about 50 yards.

He mentioned that the forward 50 gun jammed once when previously exercised, due to over heating. He had no previous experience in the Navy with 50 caliber guns. There was a seaman on board, however, who used to be in the Army, and was familiar with them.

He mentioned that he had served in USS KEMPER COUNTY, USS FARRAGUT, and USS DULUTH before reporting to PUEBLO.

Afternoon, 7 February 1969

The court reconvened at 1309 in closed session with Captain Williams as the witness. At the commencement, he asked that the record be changed concerning two statements which he had made in open court during the morning session. First, he had said that he estimated there were 2000 pounds of combustible classified material aboard PUEBLO at the time of capture. At the time he made this statement, he also noted that he did not have his notes with him. In the afternoon session, he said he had consulted his notes and wished to change his estimate to 600 pounds—that he included equipment weight in error. He also said in the

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morning session that he knew of no "on-going" destruct system development in the Navy prior to the PUEBLO incident. In the afternoon session, he noted that he meant to limit his remark on this subject to Navy ships, for there were destruct systems in certain Navy aircraft.

In subsequent discussion with counsel for the party, he adhered to his early estimate of one hour required for destruction of classified gear aboard PUEBLO. However, he could not estimate the number of man-hours required to destroy all such material.

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